

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
April 21, 2021

Present:

Board

Joseph Secrist, President	(R)
Walter Black	(D)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)
Richard Bulman	(R)
Wadella Thomas	(R)

Staff

Jeri Cook, Election Director

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Public

None

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on April 21, 2021. Due to restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, the meeting was held by videoconference and teleconference. The public was invited to listen by conference call and advised via the Board website and on the agenda of the procedure to do so. Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 17, 2021, copies of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Mr. Bulman moved approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Black seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Addition/Changes to the Agenda

Mr. Secrist asked if there were any additions to the agenda as published. Mr. Black moved approval of the agenda as presented. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Cook provided a written report of the activities of the staff prior to the meeting. A copy of that report is attached. She elaborated on her written report as follows:

- Several bills were approved by the legislature that will impact the State and Local Boards of Elections. We await direction from the State Board regarding how to proceed. Legislation was also passed regarding personnel practices in the area of Teleworking. Here again, we await further direction from the State Board.
- The selection of a pollbook vendor is anticipated in June.
- Ms. Cook prepared a projection of expenses for the balance of the year and anticipates the need for approximately \$125,000 to cover the added costs for the year due to the changes need to accomplish the General Election during the pandemic in 2020.
- The MAEO meeting scheduled for August 22-26. A proposed agenda has not been published. It is still to be determined if the meeting will be in person or virtual. Board Members were asked to be aware of the deadline to make hotel reservations if the meeting is held in person.
- Department of Budget and Management has agreed to the requested reclassifications of Election Directors positions. The State Board is expected to take action at its next meeting. This will have implications to our budget, but there is money in the requested budget to cover this increase.
- Given that the county will be obtaining a secure web site, Ms. Cook has suspended research on the cost of the Election Board having its own secure site.

Board Attorney's Report

Ms. Ryan had no items to report.

Old Business

- a. Facility for Election Office

Nothing new to report.

b. Review of Invoices

Ms. Cook previously provided Board Members with copies of invoices received since the last meeting. There were no questions from Board Members.

c. Budget FY2021

Ms. Cook previously provided reports on expenditures recorded by the county through December. She discussed in detail her projection of expense for the full year. Discussion was held regarding how to communicate our need for additional budget authority for this year.

d. County Bulletins

Ms. Cook previously provided County Bulletins to each Board Member. There were no questions.

e. Budget FY2022

No new information regarding the budget was discussed.

New Business

a. Polling place agreements

Ms. Cook provided the Board with draft agreements for the use of polling places for the 2022 Primary Election that will be held in the coming budget year. She proposed to increase the daily rate for use of the Bingo Room at the Easton Firehouse during the eight days of early voting above that paid during the last General Election due to the longer days of the Early Voting. She proposed no change in the rate for use of polling places on Election Day. Board Members discussed the suggested rates, the number of polling places that may be required for the coming Primary Election and how to recognize the added costs for COVID sanitation. The sense of the Board was that Ms. Cook should prepare a report for the next Board Meeting comparing the costs incurred for polling places in the recent General Election with the costs to that would be incurred by the Board in the upcoming Primary Election using the rates she is proposing if we have all 11 polling places. Costs for COVID sanitations should be clearly identified.

b. MAEO/Biennial conference

Ms. Cook will continue to monitor and keep the Board informed regarding the plans for the MAEO conference and the likelihood that the mandatory attendance State Biennial meeting will be held conjunction with that conference. The meeting agenda, the

determination of virtual versus in person attendance and the location of the two meetings are of interest to those who normally attend.

c. Rejection of 2020 General Ballot

The Board of Elections meet as the Board of Canvassers to consider one ballot mailed from overseas. Despite being mailed prior to the election, it was received March 18, after certification of the results. On the recommendation of the Election Director, Mr. Bulman, moved to reject the ballot. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

Confirmation of next meeting

Mr. Secrist noted that the next meeting of the Board will be Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Black moved adjournment of the meeting. Ms. Thomas seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Attested,


Joseph H. Secrist, Jr., President

Respectfully submitted,


Richard B. Bulman, Secretary

Director's Report - April 2021

- Legislative update
 1. What passed and sent to the Governor:
 - HB 745 - Additional EV centers – this will not affect us - we fall under the 50,000 voter threshold for more than one EV center
 - HB206/SB 596 - Early Voting hours for 8 days – 7:00 am to 8:00 pm daily for all elections
 - SB 683 - Permanent absentee list, all eligible voters, who have not been placed on the permanent absentee list, will be sent an absentee ballot application (as written this is to be done by the LBE not SBE) before the primary election; ballot drop boxes with security and accessibility to the security of the drop boxes. Will need to hire additional staff for the added workload, this will include a new computer area set up. Will await SBE guidance.
 - HB156/SB 283 – mostly is pertaining to colleges and overseas (military) voters but there is a provision that addresses “large residential communities” including continuing care and senior care communities to contact and gain input when establishing precinct boundaries and designating location of polling places. It does not define “large”. Will await SBE guidance.
 - HB738 – Revisions to Certificates of Candidacy and Ballot Questions – will await guidance from SBE
 - HB73/SB710 – State & Local Government & Private Employers – Teleworking – maximize the number of telework employees following state guidelines and each year agency will provide the legislature with the number of eligible and participating employees. Will await guidance from SBE.
 - HB222/SB224 – Value My Vote Act – SBE shall adopt regulations establishing a program to inform eligible voters of upcoming elections and how to exercise the right to vote. SBE and LBE will work with the department of correction facilities. Will await guidance from SBE.
- Easton will be holding their town election on May 4th and Trappe’s town election on May 11th. We have provided precinct registers for each town to assist in conducting their election. Staff member in the office during regular hours, if needed.
- Had a meeting of the progress of pollbooks, it is still in the evaluation stage. Timeline as to which company will be awarded the project, hopefully, in June.
- Candidate filing – a new monitor will be purchased in the new fiscal year for the candidate filing area
 1. Have had a very few inquiries at this point
- Due to the unprecedented election in 2020, there must be a request from the county for an additional approximate \$125,000. Broken down on spreadsheet provided previously.
 1. I requested the county set aside the \$100,000 that was not used in FY2020 to place into FY2021 – was told that could not be done
 2. No previous budget has been overspent, during my time as director

- Received information that the county is in the process of obtaining a secure website
 1. This should eliminate the need for a separate website
 2. Fred is working with Parker Durham to bring the election office on board
- Provided the MAEO conference can be in August, in your packet is the registration form for the hotel in OC for the MAEO conference – if you are making reservations must tell them it is for MAEO conference and you should not be charged the deposit. The agenda will be coming out at a later date. The restrictions at this point are for 50% capacity. For those spending the night, as done in the past, I will be getting a check from the county to pay for the rooms when I get there. This will be in coordination with the biennial from SBE, if it does happen.
- I will be on leave, out of the state, April 22 through May 7 – will be checking emails once a day during that time.